



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Joe Baril, Tom Barnhart, Lori Bartinik, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Syma Ebbin, June Evered, Peter Fairbank, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Debra Jenkins, Carole McCarthy, Kevin McMahon, Richard Metayer, David Miner, Deborah Monteiro, James Moulding, Scott Newsome, Nora Patterson, Deborah Peruzzotti, Robert Post, Kevin Power, Don Pratt, Mary-Ellen Schefers, Eleanor Scussel, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Fritz Stein, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Patti Thunberg, Cheryl Tilney, Kevin Trejo, Tom Vivirito, Robert Walker Sr, and John Wheeler.

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

7:30 PM

Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

36 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Rep. Svencer arrived later.)

The Moderator announced that Reps. Barnhart and Pratt called to say they would be absent and that Rep. Svencer called to say he would be arriving late.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bartinik, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Jenkins, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Miner, Rep. Monteiro, Rep. Moulding, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Patterson, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Scussel, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere, Rep. Stein, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Thunberg, Rep. Tilney, Rep. Trejo, Rep. Vivirito, Rep. Walker, Sr. and Rep. Wheeler, Jr.

Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. McMahon, Rep. Post, Rep. Pratt and Rep. Schefers

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Human Services Director Marge Fondulas, Police Chief Kelly Fogg, Deputy Chief Michael Crowley, Captain Steve Smith, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Rep. Walker.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2007

A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Trejo, seconded by Rep. Miner.

The Moderator commented that a change to the minutes on page two was distributed to all members prior to meeting.

The vote to accept the minutes as amended carried 33 in favor, 2 abstentions (Abstaining: Reps. Jenkins and Scussel.)

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Moderator announced that a copy of the Ordinance appropriating funds for additions and renovations to the Groton Senior Center was mailed to all members. She encouraged members to attend the Public Hearing scheduled for May 15, 2007.

2007-0097

FYE 2007 Fourth Quarter Transfers

This matter was Referred to the RTM Finance Committee, due back on June 13, 2007. The motion carried.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:**1. Financial report**

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated Fund balance as of July 1, 2006 is approximately \$9.2 million; the General Contingency balance will be \$248,400 if the RTM approves the Fourth Quarter Transfers that were referred to committee earlier in this meeting; the Capital Reserve balance is \$2,995,359 as of April 30, 2007; the increase is mainly due to interest income.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager encouraged members to participate in the Business Caravan concerning the school projects that is scheduled for May 19, 2007. He mentioned that a school construction update report is included in the Town Manager's News that was distributed this evening. He noted that the bids for the special storm windows for Fitch High School and Catherine Kolnaski School should be received in several weeks. He stated that a definitive timeline for the opening of the schools would then be established.

In response to Reps. Sebastian and Ebbin, Mr. Oefinger clarified that the Town is attempting to stay on budget for the school construction projects. He noted that unexpected additional costs for the State-mandated storm windows were not included in the project estimates.

In response to Rep. Cerf, the Town Manager commented that the Town is closely monitoring the Legislature for action concerning a State health insurance program to include municipal employees. He stated that it could be beneficial for the community, but he has some reservations in regard to the details and implementation and he is concerned that it is an unfunded mandate. He believes that further study is needed before the Legislature takes action on this item.

The Moderator interjected that members could convey their support for this legislative bill as long as it would actually benefit communities.

G. LIAISON REPORTS

The Moderator suggested dispensing with other reports, there being no objections from the members, and proceeding directly to the Finance Committee report concerning the Mystic River Homes Tax Abatement request.

1. Town Council - Rep. Monteiro

No report.

2. Economic Development Commission - Rep. Cerf

Rep. Cerf mentioned at the request of Barbara Strother that a new small business program has been established at the Mitchell College Center for Entrepreneurship, administered by the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce. More information can be obtained by contacting the Chamber.

3. Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee - Rep. Patterson

No report.

4. Permanent School Building Committee - Rep. Miner

No report.

5. School Design Committee Phase II - Reps. Smuts & Harrell

No report.

6. Shellfish Task Force - Rep. Ebbin

No report.

7. Flanders Road Utility Extension Committee - Reps. Bauer & Wheeler

No report.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS**1. FINANCE**

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting of April 30, 2007. (Minutes are attached). A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Miner. The vote carried 33 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Rep Ebbin. Abstaining: Rep. Jenkins.)

2007-0077 Adoption of Mystic River Homes Tax Abatement Ordinance

ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AN ENHANCED TAX ABATEMENT ON FORTY-SIX HOUSING UNITS OWNED BY MYSTIC RIVER HOMES, INC. AND USED SOLELY FOR RENTAL TO LOW OR MODERATE-INCOME PERSONS OR FAMILIES

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTON:

That pursuant to Section 8-215 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town Manager is authorized to enter into an agreement with Mystic River Homes, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut with a principal place of business in the Town of Groton, County of New London, State of Connecticut, for a full abatement of taxes on the land and buildings located in the village of Noank, Town of Groton, Connecticut that comprise the forty-six units of housing used solely for rental to low or moderate-income persons or families which were constructed in or around 1978 (the "Housing Units"). The Housing Units to which this Ordinance applies have been given an abatement in the amount of 80% pursuant to Town of Groton Ordinance No. 107 and the "Tax Abatement Agreement" between the Town of Groton and Mystic River Homes, Inc. authorized by resolution of the Town Council on June 3, 1974. It is the purpose of this Ordinance to increase the abatement to be applied to said Housing Units from 80% to 100%. This Ordinance shall supersede the provisions of Ordinance No. 107 specifically applicable to said Housing Units. The remaining provisions of Ordinance No. 107 shall remain in full force and effect. The 80% abatement applicable to said Housing Units shall continue until the execution of the agreement authorized by this Ordinance. In no event shall the term of said agreement be longer than the term of the existing agreement. This Ordinance shall become effective 44 days after publication of notice of passage.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Rep. Ebbin, seconded by Rep. Moulding, that this matter be Vetoed.

Rep. Ebbin explained that she made the motion to veto for the purpose of discussion. Members discussed the income requirement for residency at Mystic River Homes, the need for increased tax abatement from 80% to 100%, and the impact on the Town budget. Rep. Sebastian disclosed that he is on the Mystic River Homes Board of Directors. He noted that the organization is non-profit and has been impacted by the decrease in subsidies from the State and Federal governments. He believes that Mystic River Homes fills a great need in the community.

(Rep. Svencer arrived at this time.)

Rep. Cerf noted that Mystic River Homes benefits by having a fine cadre of volunteers and is a wonderful establishment.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Votes: Opposed: 35 - Moderator Billing, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bartnik, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Jenkins, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Miner, Rep. Monteiro, Rep. Moulding, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Patterson, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Scussel, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere, Rep. Stein, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Thunberg, Rep. Tilney, Rep. Trejo, Rep. Vivirito, Rep. Walker, Sr. and Rep. Wheeler, Jr.
Abstain: 1 - Rep. Svencer

2. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Vivirito**

No report.

3. EDUCATION**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Patterson**

No report.

4. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Wheeler**

No report.

5. RECREATION**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town- Chairman Power**

No report.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt**

No report.

7. PUBLIC WORKS**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins**

No report.

8. RULES & PROCEDURES**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Stein**

No report.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. was made by Rep. Trejo, seconded by Rep. Miner and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk